



Press Release

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Michigan Community Action joins national campaign to reduce poverty and promote economic security

Lansing – The Michigan Community Action Agency Association will join community action agencies across the nation in a campaign to reduce poverty.

“Rooting Out Poverty: A Campaign by America’s Community Action Network” calls for action to promote economic security for all Americans, especially those who are poor. Published by the Community Action Partnership, a national organization with more than 1,000 member agencies, “Rooting Out Poverty” will be released nationally in New Orleans during the Partnership’s 2008 Winter Management and Leadership Training Conference.

“With input from community action agencies that work in the trenches daily fighting poverty and promoting economic security, ‘Rooting Out Poverty’ contains effective and realistic strategies that will help create a strong economy for all Americans,” said Ronald B. Borngesser, president of the Michigan Community Action Agency Association and executive director of the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency. “We are confident these suggestions will benefit the state of Michigan and provide a blueprint for enhancing the lives of our low-income families.”

The report offers five action themes and more than two dozen specific recommendations and strategies to help children, families, senior citizens, and other individuals who are vulnerable to poverty, economic deprivation, and other significant barriers to economic self-sufficiency. They include:

- **Maximize participation** - maximum feasible participation of those who are seeking economic self-sufficiency.
- **Build an economy that works for everyone** – an economy that provides a wide range of jobs and addresses financial and economic conditions of all residents.
- **Invest in the future** – provide the training now to develop the knowledge and skills that today’s children and workers will need for the jobs and industries of tomorrow.
- **Maximize equality of opportunity** – facilitate access to key opportunities for personal and professional growth and advancement.
- **Ensure healthy people and places** – ensure access to adequate health care and homes that are weatherized to prevent high heating and cooling costs.

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“I applaud the Community Action Partnership and support its efforts to reduce poverty in Michigan and the nation,” said Ismael Ahmed, director of Michigan Department of Human Services.

“Poverty is, I believe, the most important issue of our time. About 20 percent of people in Michigan, including a half-million children, live in or near poverty. Almost 30 percent of people in Michigan live in low-income families. Today’s report and call to action is a ray of hope for a better tomorrow for all Michigan families.”

The report offers solutions and strategies for promoting:

- quality child care.
- employment and training opportunities, especially for those lacking basic skills.
- responsible health, energy, and conservation policies.
- assistance to seniors and vulnerable adults.

“While some Americans are enjoying our nation’s economic well-being, far, far too many are not,” said James Norman, partnership board member and chairman of the steering committee for the National Conversation on Poverty and Economic Security.

“The number of poor people in the United States ranges from conservative estimates of 15 million to more than 35 million. Community action agencies have a track record of 40-plus years effectively helping poor people and families, and our new campaign will enable us to educate, advocate, and help even more.”

Michigan’s 30 community action agencies will use the report to refine services aimed at improving the lives of low-income families and help them achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency. Many of the report’s recommendations are currently being implemented in all 83 Michigan counties. The report will also serve as a blueprint for a structuring a broader approach to poverty reduction, focusing less on emergency services and more on addressing the underlying causes of poverty.

The Michigan Community Action Agency Association represents the state’s 30 community action agencies that provide anti-poverty and human services programs in all 83 Michigan counties.

The Michigan Department of Human Services administers funds that go to community action agencies and assists children, families and vulnerable adults to be safe, stable and self-supporting. The department’s mission is to reduce poverty, help all children have a great start in life and assist clients to achieve their full potential. For more information about DHS, visit www.michigan.gov/dhs

Based in Washington, DC, the Community Action Partnership is the national association representing the interests of the 1,000 community action agencies across the country that are helping low-income people change their lives and embody the spirit of hope. For more information about the partnership and CAAs, visit the association's Web site at www.communityactionpartnership.com